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The Temporal Monstrosity of the Wandering Jew in *Melmoth the Wanderer*

Bettina Bildhauer, writing of medieval representations of Jews and the monstrous, asserts that "it is often not its own misshapen or hybrid body that makes the monster, but its relation to other bodies, social or individual" (2003, 76). In Charles Maturin's 1820 novel, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, this monstrous relationship is a temporal one, deriving from the complicated and vexed relationship that Christianity posits with its Jewish origins. The uncannily long life of the novel's titular character derives from the legend of the Wandering Jew, who insulted Christ during the Passion and was therefore cursed to linger on earth until the Second Coming. What makes the legendary Wandering Jew 'monstrous' is not his treatment of Christ, but his punishment: the eternity to which he is cursed and the uncanny temporality his presence generates. The Wandering Jew's temporality is always out of sync with the bodies he encounters, both "social and individual," and so too is the temporality of the monstrous Melmoth, who moves in nature-defying ways through time and space, attempting to destroy others in the hope of saving himself.

The word 'monster' derives from two Latin verbs *monere* (to warn) and *demonstrare* (to show) and we can discern both of these elements in the Wandering Jew legend. The Wandering Jew's cursed state serves as a warning to those who refuse to believe. His unnatural existence demonstrates the consequence of failure to accept Christian temporal order. The Wandering Jew can be seen as a Christian reaction to Jewish refusal to acknowledge Christianity as the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy. This Jewish refusal also, of course, includes rejection of Christian salvational history and its temporal structures, the very temporal structures that shape the Wandering Jew legend. Christian thinkers and artists from Augustine in the patristic period through William de Brailes, the English innovator of the Book of Hours form, to 19th-century French writers and artists such as Eugène Sue and Gustave Doré, have therefore often represented Jews as existing outside of time – in the case of the Wandering Jew's long life, excessively, monstrously so.[1]

Melmoth is not a Jew, but like the Wandering Jew, his unnatural lifespan results from transgressive behavior. Melmoth's cursed state appears to come from Faustian explorations of forbidden knowledge that the novel never fully explains. Melmoth has "demon eyes" (Maturin 2008, 45), a laugh that "chilled the blood" (66) and a supernatural ability to cross great distances and to penetrate barriers, even the dungeons of the Inquisition, with seeming ease. Maturin draws upon Matthew Lewis's 1796 portrayal of the Wandering Jew in *The Monk*. There a character describes the Wandering Jew as "an expression of fury, despair, and malevolence, that struck horror to my very soul. An involuntary convulsion made me shudder" (Lewis 2016, 131). In

1 On Augustine and De Brailes see Lampert-Weissig (2017). Discussions of Sue and Doré can be found in essays in Braillon-Phillipe (2001).

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his portrayal of Melmoth the Wanderer, Maturin retains Lewis's frightening, Cain-like, portrayal of the Wandering Jew. All of Melmoth's frightening traits, along with Melmoth the Wanderer's torment of those in despair, create what the character Stanton condemns as a "monster" (Maturin 2008, 58).

The novel's most significant link to the Wandering Jew legend, however, comes not through Melmoth's own transgressions or uncanny traits, but through Maturin's portrayal of Adonijah the Jew, one of the novel's two Jewish characters. Part of the novel's larger network of character doubles, and with his own life also unnaturally extended, Adonijah, a Wandering Jew surrogate, serves as a double to Melmoth the Wanderer. The horror of Alonzo Monçada's (and the reader's) first encounter with Adonijah reflects, I suggest, an understanding of the Jews as temporal monstrosities. Adonijah himself has a double in Solomon, the crypto-Jew that Monçada encounters before he meets Adonijah.

Solomon and Adonijah, like the Wandering Jew himself, come to represent what Maturin portrays as Jewish temporal monstrosity. Toni Wein has argued that Maturin, an Anglo-Irish prelate, has created a novel of "interlocking circle of aspersions: Ireland:Spain :: Catholicism: the Jew" (2006, 3). Writing of the Wandering Jew in the context of these sectarian and national tensions, Carol Margaret Davison has contended, "the often invoked scenario of the Spanish Inquisition and the appearance of this wanderer in the Gothic genre bespeak, among other things, anxieties in Britain about the nature of British national identity and the possibility of Jewish assimilation" (2004, 79). I want to suggest that the monstrous temporality of Solomon and Adonijah signals the impossibility of such assimilation. That Solomon and Adonijah are ultimately discarded by the narrative reflects Maturin's belief, prevalent among Christian Europeans of his time, that the Jews are trapped in the past, separated from the progress of history and from full membership in the community of the nation. Maturin's portrayal of Jews and of the legend upon which he draws to create them reveal how anti-Semitic representation does not always manifest itself in extreme forms such as ritual murder accusation or myths of physical difference. These Jews are depicted not simply as different in belief or even in physicality, but as excluded from the flow of time.

The Jews in *Melmoth* are, even when partially sympathetic, fundamentally alien. Maturin uses his Jewish figures to frightening effect not only by setting them up as thrilling horrors lurking in hidden lairs, but as monsters trapped in the past. Maturin's use of these Jewish characters and the Wandering Jew legend informs the novel's atmospheric terrors and, especially, serves to heighten the sense of dread and even evil that characterizes Melmoth the Wanderer. This essay explores how Maturin's representations of Jewish temporal monstrosity in the characters of Solomon and Adonijah inflect his portrayal of Melmoth as monstrous not only by reinforcing a link between Melmoth and the Wandering Jew, but through intertextual connections to figures like Shakespeare's Shylock. Maturin's allusions to both the Christian exegetical tradition and to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* situate Solomon and Adonijah within a broader range of anti-Jewish representations that depict the Jew as both threatening and risible.

The Wandering Jew and Melmoth: Monstrous Legend and Monstrous Form

The Wandering Jew legend is an apt source for a novel that one critic has called a "gigantic but beautiful freak" (Null 1977, 1367-137).[2] I will here first provide a brief overview of the Wandering Jew tradition, which has influenced hundreds of works of art, followed by a selective synopsis of *Melmoth,* highlighting the portions of this complex novel upon which we will focus.

The legend of the Wandering Jew, which dates back at least to the sixth century, recounts that, as Jesus made his way to Calvary, he stopped before the home of a Jew and asked for rest. The Jew harshly refused and Jesus turned to him and said, "I will go, but you will remain until I return." Since that time, the Jew, converted to Christianity by his experience, has been unable to die and has wandered, as suggested by his names in English and French (*le Juif errant*). The Wandering Jew, sometimes also called Cartaphilus or later Ahasver, will tell his story to all who ask and thereby serves as a witness of the Passion and as a sign of Christian truth.[3] As the figure's German name, *der ewige Jude* (the eternal Jew), suggests, however, temporality plays a significant role in the legend. The German name focuses attention on the paradox of his existence: immortality as curse. This temporal dimension reflects, I would argue, not only the specifics of the Wandering Jew legend, but also Christian representations of Jews and Judaism more generally.

Temporality has always played a fundamental role in how Christians have viewed themselves in relation to Jews and Judaism. Christian theology asserts that Christianity is the true fulfilment of Jewish prophecy and that the Christian faith supersedes Judaism, both fulfilling and subsuming Jewish teachings. The dynamics of supersession require an "old" faith be replaced by a "new" one, as demonstrated by the supersessionist nomenclature of "the Old Testament" and through a multitude of typological formations, including the story of Jacob and Esau, referenced several times by Maturin in *Melmoth* (22, 76, 195). Textual versions of the legend, including Matthew Paris's influential thirteenth-century contribution, tell us that the Wandering Jew and Jesus were roughly the same age at the time of the Passion. Visual representations, however, from Matthew Paris's own through to Gustave Doré's famous 19th-century illustrations, depict the Wandering Jew as an old man.[4]

The Wandering Jew is an uncanny embodiment of supersession. As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen argues, "the monster arrives […] to recount a lesson in the complexity of temporality" (2013, 451). In the case of both the Wandering Jew and of *Melmoth the Wanderer*, this lesson is a very specifically Christian one. In creating the character of Melmoth the Wanderer, Maturin combines the Wandering Jew's uncanny temporality with another famous legend: Melmoth's strange existence seems to derive from unholy dealings reminiscent of Faust. But while exactly how Melmoth came to live so long is unclear, his longevity is clearly shown through various means, including a 1646 portrait and a mysterious old manuscript. Perhaps the clearest evidence of the preternatural

2 On the novel's structure also see Ragaz (2006).

3 Anderson (1965) is an indispensable reference on the Wandering Jew tradition.

4 For a historical overview of visualizations of the Wandering Jew see the essays in Braillon-Phillipe (2001). On the temporality of the earliest Wandering Jew visualizations, see also Lampert-Weissig (2017).

length of Melmoth's lifespan comes from the story of Adonijah the Jew, who is also unnaturally old, a state that derives from his contact with Melmoth.

To briefly summarize the portions of the novel most salient to our discussion, the novel begins in Ireland with young John Melmoth's visit to the home of his dying uncle. There he hears of a mysterious and diabolical ancestor, "Melmoth," whose 1646 portrait he discovers in his uncle's house. Through stories told by servants and an elliptic old manuscript written by a man named Stanton, John Melmoth learns how his ancestor Melmoth the Wanderer has tormented his victims. Melmoth the Wanderer himself then appears to John. Later, a Spaniard, Alonzo Monçada, relates to John his harrowing story of family mistreatment, forced confinement in a monastery, and persecution by the Inquisition. In prison, Melmoth appears to Monçada and offers him help to escape, which Monçada refuses. Monçada finally does escape and while in hiding he encounters two Jews, Solomon and Adonijah, the latter of which compels him to transcribe another manuscript that also contains stories of Melmoth. Each tale unfolds within the frame of the conversation between John Melmoth and Monçada, to whom Melmoth himself finally appears. Melmoth then disappears leaving only his handkerchief: "the last trace of the Wanderer" (542). The Wanderer's fate – like his origins – remains unexplained as the novel concludes.

"At once fearful and ludicrous:" Solomon the Jew

The Jews in *Melmoth the Wanderer* are the very opposite of wanderers. The Wandering Jew of legend usually appears suddenly, often as if from nowhere; one of the central elements of his legend is that he has no fixed abode. In contrast, in *Melmoth*, the Spaniard Alonzo Monçada stumbles upon the two Jews Solomon and Adonijah in secret chambers.[5] Both Solomon and Adonijah are forced to live in hiding because of the repression and prejudice of Catholic Spain, a major target of critique in the novel. Their refuges, however, whether facilitated by pretense or by subterranean space, are not simply dwellings set apart from public space, but are also their own temporal worlds. Solomon and Adonijah, although they do not wander, resemble the Wandering Jew in that they exist outside Christian temporality.

At the end of Volume II, Monçada has realized that he has been resting, unknowingly, on his brother's grave: "I flew from the spot as if pursued by demons" (244). In flight from his macabre discovery, Monçada moves through a dark passage until he reaches a door, which he opens to find himself alone in a "very small" room (245). Studying "its singular furniture" (245) he sees a cloth-covered table, a "vessel of a singular construction" and an indecipherable book, which he tells young Melmoth that he mistook

> for a book of magic, and closed it with a feeling of exculpatory horror. (It happened to be a copy of the Hebrew Bible, marked with the Samaritan points). There was a knife too; and a cock was fastened to the leg of the table, whose loud crows announced his impatience of further constraint. (245)

5 Jews have already been referenced in Volume II, portrayed as usurers. They lend Monçada's brother the money required to arrange for Monçada's escape and do so "on Jewish terms" (174).

Monçada has entered the chamber of a crypto-Jew, Solomon, as he is on the verge of revealing the family's Jewish heritage to his son, who has been raised with the Christian name of Antonio. Antonio "shudders with horror" when his father reveals the family secret, offering Antonio the choice of either embracing his Jewish name, Manasseh ben Solomon, or the name of "*parricide*" (246; original emphasis). An extended scene then unfolds between father and son. Solomon decries that in Spain a "confession of the true faith would" mean death for his family (246), bemoaning that Jews in Spain are "every where stigmatized and spoken against" despite their having created half of the nation's "prosperity" (247). Solomon repeatedly calls on the biblical Abraham, thereby invoking the covenant for which he was prepared to sacrifice his son. Solomon exhorts, "Behold, the mysterious instruments of your initiation," pointing to an "uncorrupted book of Moses" (248). He gestures to the rooster, but also the knife, which will be used to sacrifice the bird, but also presumably is at the ready for Antonio's eventual circumcision.

In recounting his experience to young John Melmoth, Monçada makes the somewhat confusing claim that "I understood not a word of what was said, except the reference to the Inquisition" (248). Since Monçada has already admitted to confusing a Hebrew text with a book of magic, it seems clear that he does not know Hebrew and it appears that Solomon and his son do not know it either. What language could father and son be speaking besides Spanish? Are the Jewish rites to which Solomon refers what is unfathomable to him? In any case, despite his confessed lack of understanding, Monçada, who has been hidden behind a curtain, reveals himself to the father and son. He threatens to expose Solomon to the Inquisition unless Solomon helps Monçada to elude capture. His sudden appearance, crucially, interrupts Solomon's attempt to convert his son to Judaism. Monçada's risk of self-exposure implies that he sees more at stake than his own safety. Monçada's intervention seems designed to prevent the son's conversion to Judaism, including the implication of circumcision, which, in this context, seems not sanctifying, but grisly and horrible.

Monçada's intrusion startles Solomon and the scene quickly devolves into a frenzied farce, which Monçada describes as "at once fearful and ludicrous" (248). Solomon, compelled to slaughter the now frenzied bird recites the Latin formula "Statim mactat gallum," (248) which translates literally, and awkwardly, into 'immediately kills rooster.' Solomon, therefore, seems to understand a Hebrew benediction only through a Latin source. His ritual is not an inherited holy tradition, but a clumsily rendered reading of a vaguely understood instruction manual.[6] Indeed, in this scene, all of Jewish tradition seems to vacillate between the fearful and the ludicrous. Hebrew is mistaken for magical script, the fundamental rite of circumcision is confused with the tradition of *kappores*, a customary Ashkenazic atonement ritual performed by waving a chicken over the participant's head followed by ritual kosher slaughter. Maturin's conflation of *kappores* and circumcision provoke both horror and laughter at Solomon's expense.

Solomon's botched ritual also provides a prime example of Maturin's use of a complex intertextuality to portray his Jewish characters through the use of footnotes. These notes serve to anchor his supernatural tale in a historical and cultural "reality" that is figured as exotic and arcane. The chapter that introduces Solomon opens with a footnote containing several Latin lines on a study of Jewish rituals of atonement from

6 For a brief, but illuminating, discussion of the *kappores* ritual see Boyarin (2018).

Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice by the Reverend William Magee, Archbishop of Dublin.[7] Maturin's use of a footnote produces the effect of illuminating mysterious, foreign knowledge to the reader. Massimiliano Demata, analysing William Beckford's *Vathek*, has shown how textual apparatus can have the effect of making it seem as a fictional "tale" that is intruded on by "elements of 'reality'" (2003, 23). This use of the footnote in a fictional narrative can create "a narrative space which discloses to the reader the dangerous proximity and closeness of the alien presence of the […] 'other'" (23). Following Demata's reading, I would argue that Maturin, through his description of Solomon's "singular" chamber, its curious implements, and obscure rites, creates an atmosphere of exoticized terror that is augmented by the "documentary" Latin notes. The Magee footnote links Maturin's portrayal of Judaism and Hinduism, depicting them as alarming, alien faiths that threaten not only sanctity but also life itself.

I want to suggest that Maturin's depiction of Solomon combines what Andrew Rudd sees as the novel's "imperial gothic" mode with the English theatrical tradition of portraying the Jew as both deadly and laughable, as typified by Shakespeare's Shylock (2007, 42). The scene in Solomon's chamber displays not only the knowledge of Latin and Hebrew Maturin would have had as a graduate of Dublin's Trinity College, but also the intimacy with the theatre that ultimately derailed his pastoral career.[8] In 1816, Edmund Kean, whose innovative sympathetic 1814 portrayal of Shylock had elevated him to stardom, performed Maturin's play *Bertram* at London's Drury Lane theatre.[9] The extensive publicity *Bertram* generated brought it to the attention of Maturin's superiors and doomed his church career.[10]

Maturin's portrayals of Solomon and also of Adonijah clearly draw on English traditions of representing Jews on the stage. Maturin sets up Monçada's 'discoveries' of Solomon and of Adonijah in a theatrical way, with Monçada's (and the reader's) entrances in the Jewish chambers each evoking an audience viewing a staged set as the curtain rises. In the Georgian period, representation of the ethnic Other on the stage played an important role in how discourses about English identity, both majority and minority, were shaped. The representation of Jewish identity, Michael Ragussis argues, "functioned at a highly symbolic level to set the farthest limit of the question of the internal other within Britain, both entirely the opposite to, and yet increasingly a double

7 As Wein shows, this work, first published in 1801, derived from lectures by Magee for divinity students at Trinity College Dublin, where Maturin had studied (2006, 11-17).

8 Indeed, candidates for the Bachelor of Arts were required to be able to translate biblical passages from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. See Trinity College Center for Biblical Studies (2018).

9 On Kean see Lew (1994, 174) and Gross (1992, 125-134).

10 Maturin was in London for Kean's performance in *Bertram*. He also seems to have known Kean's portrayal of Shylock. In a letter to his mentor Sir Walter Scott, dated 2 July 1816, Maturin writes of his London trip and the actors in Drury Lane using an allusion to a line of Shylock's in Act III of *The Merchant of Venice*: "I quitted London (where I staid only a week) on the first of June, indeed I know not why they pressed my going over with such importunity; Kean I had seen often before, and the rest of the Corps dramatique remind me of Shakespeare's wilderness of Monkies" (Scott 1980, 60). Maturin references Kean's performance in Maturin's own work through Shylock, the performance for which Kean was famous, specifically here Act III, scene I, line 114 (Shakespeare 2005, 466).

of, the English" (2010, 31). The Georgian stage presented a range of Jewish types, but was still bound by the extremes of "revered and reviled," exemplified by actor Charles Macklin's performance of Shylock as villain, which premiered in 1741 and by Richard Cumberland's positive portrait of Sheva the Jew in *The Jew* (1794).[11] Drawing from lines of *The Merchant of Venice*, Solomon makes one of his frequent exhortations to "Father Abraham" and a comic play on Shakespeare's bawdy reference to Shylock's stolen "two stones" in Act 2.8.20 of *The Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare 2005, 464). Solomon exclaims: "My cock, – my cock, – my cock! oh! I am undone!" (257). That Solomon's son is named "Antonio" only further enmeshes the scene in English stage history: like Shylock, Solomon threatens the bodily integrity of an Antonio, even if this Antonio is his own offspring. This scene's intertextuality ties Solomon to a long stage tradition of the Jew as both menace and buffoon. Like Shylock, Solomon is a threat who is ultimately reduced to an object of ridicule. The theatrical context of Maturin's allusion influences how it is perceived. If we consider his portrayal of Solomon in light of Bildhauer's reflection on monstrosity, we are reminded that dramatic performances through their very form highlight "relations" among "bodies, social or individual" (2003, 76). The theatrical elements of Maturin's representation flatten Solomon as a character, placing him squarely within a tradition of the staged Jew, and thereby fixing his relation to the novel's other characters and to the reader.

Monçada refers to Solomon as a "Jew innate" (245) because of Solomon's willingness to dissemble in order to survive, but this judgment against his integrity and his heritage is also a critique of Catholic persecution and corruption, a major theme throughout the novel. Even Monçada himself is an object of this critique, as he displays strong prejudice against Jews and even frightening animalistic characteristics. Although Solomon gives him food and shelter, Monçada nevertheless can regard him with "wolfish" eyes (249). When the Inquisition does finally come knocking on the door, Solomon, found out because of Monçada, nevertheless helps Monçada to escape. Solomon is able to keep up the fiction that he is a Catholic until the Inquisitor threatens to take his "last denier" (261). Then he drops all "self-possession" and cries out to "Father Abraham, and all the holy prophets!" (261), descending to the stereotype that all Jews are hopelessly undone by their greed, even as the stereotypes of Catholic hypocrisy and cruelty are simultaneously invoked.

Solomon, who has masqueraded as a Christian in the name of self-preservation, seems in many ways to be a man who adapts to his times. Nevertheless, Maturin reveals that being a "Jew innate" (245) also means being trapped in the past. Under duress, Solomon falls into strange archaic speech patterns, as though his inadequately veiled Jewish identity causes him to erupt in Old Testament cadences. When "in much perturbation" (258), Solomon uses phrases such as "I remove this blaspheming carrion, who struggleth with me" (258) or tells his servant "yea, set thy face like a flint" (258), using words from the biblical books of Deuteronomy and Judges. That his servant Rebekah also uses archaic speech reinforces a sense that this archaism is not individual and idiosyncratic, but tied to Jewish identity. Solomon and Rebekah's failure to conceal

11 On the connections between Cumberland and Kean, see Ragussis (2010, 200f.). The phrase "revered and reviled" comes from an essay on medieval representation by Elisa Narin van Court (2000).

their Jewish natures links them to an earlier time not merely in their own lives, but in history. Rebekah and Solomon vacillate between their feigned Christian identities and their Jewish identities, which tie them to archaic speech that echoes the cadence of the King James translation of the Hebrew Bible, or, as Maturin would know it, the Old Testament. Their Jewish identities are associated not only with another place, but, crucially, with an earlier time. Their speech patterns link them to the Jewish character, Adonijah, who uses ancient cadence exclusively.

"Embodied representation of the old law:" Adonijah

In keeping with the doubling structures of the novel, Maturin, after the scene of Monçada's encounter with Solomon, the crypto-Jew, describes an encounter with Adonijah, a Jew who does not vacillate between faiths, but remains tied to Judaism. Monçada, once again on the run from the Inquisition and at the end of a dark passage, finds yet another chamber distinguished by striking furnishings:

> In the centre of the room stood a table covered with black cloth; it supported an iron lamp of an antique and singular form, by whose light I had been directed, and was now enabled to descry furniture that appeared sufficiently extraordinary. There were, amid maps and globes, several instruments, of which my ignorance did not permit me then to know the use, –some, I have since learned, were anatomical; there was an electrifying machine, and a curious *model of a rack* in ivory; there were few books, but several scrolls of parchment, inscribed with large characters in red and ochre coloured ink; and around the room were placed four skeletons, not in cases, but in a kind of upright coffin, that gave their bony emptiness a kind of ghastly and imperative prominence, as if they were the real and rightful tenants of that singular apartment. (262-263; original emphasis)

The room also boasts taxidermized animals, including an alligator and a mammoth, as well as antlers that Monçada in his "terror believed to be those of the devil" (263) but which are actually elk.

In addition to these macabre furnishings, there are also items that Monçada cannot quite figure out. While smaller, they are "not less horrible, – human and brute abortions, in all their states of anomalous and deformed construction, not preserved in spirits, but standing in the ghastly nakedness of their white diminutive bones" (263). Monçada believes these to be "attendant imps of some infernal ceremony, which the grand wizard, who now burst on my sight, was to preside over" (263). This presumed wizard is

> an old man, wrapped in a long robe; his head was covered with a black velvet cap, with a broad border of furs, his spectacles were of such a size as almost to hide his face, and he turned over some scrolls of parchment with an anxious and trembling hand; then seizing a scull that lay on the table, and grasping it in fingers hardly less bony, and not less yellow, seemed to apostrophize it in the most earnest manner. (263)

Upon seeing him, Monçada fears he is "involuntary witness of some infernal orgie," but the "wizard" turns out to be an old Jew, a Shylock transfigured into a desiccated Hamlet (263). Adonijah dwells undisturbed in his rooms, copying a manuscript that contains the story of the Wanderer, with whom he had a youthful encounter that altered his existence, which now stretches out unnaturally as the Wanderer's does. His eyesight and strength failing, Adonijah sets Monçada to the task of copying the manuscript.

Just as he has misunderstood objects in Solomon's room, Monçada also misjudges the contents of Adonijah's chamber. The curious and morbid objects Adonijah's chamber holds serve not as instruments of magic, but as objects of study. At first puzzled that Monçada fears the specimens and skeletons in the chamber, Adonijah asks "Were not thy masters, the Jesuits, masters also of the healing art" (265). Adonijah pities Monçada's ignorance, which Adonijah attributes to his Catholicism. Maturin further reinforces his novel's portrayal of Catholic ignorance by narrating that Adonijah evaded detection of his manuscript about the Wanderer by encoding Spanish using the letters of the Greek alphabet, a code quickly recognized by Monçada. In contrast to Solomon, Adonijah the Jew represents not only a Jewish faith that is sincere, but that is compatible with a rational mind that embraces learning.

By further contrasting Adonijah's Judaism with the hypocrisy and ignorance of Catholicism, Maturin establishes a link between Adonijah's 'pure' Jewish faith and Protestantism, as well creating a contrast with the corrupted Judaism of Solomon the crypto-Jew. The connection between an uncorrupted Judaism and Protestant belief is bolstered by details such as Adonijah's plan to help Monçada reach a Protestant land and Monçada's observation of Adonijah "absorbed in mental prayer" (268), a stark contrast to the ritual spectacles of Catholicism critiqued in the novel that aligns with broader Protestant critique. Adonijah's faith, however, is always measured by Protestant standards. Monçada states, "I half-believed that a Jew might find entrance and adoption amid the family and fold of the blessed" (268). He cannot fully believe that Adonijah will find salvation because his Judaism holds him back.

In his portrait of Adonijah, Maturin draws upon traditional anti-Jewish tropes. The huge spectacles Adonijah wears (263) are not simply marks of age, but part of a long tradition of Christian representation of Jewish 'blindness.'[12] Even the light that leads Monçada to the chamber reinforces this idea. In a novel permeated with images of light and darkness that signify good and evil, the existence of this light signifies the purity of Adonijah's faith. The light is, however, faint, thereby signifying Judaism's limitations.[13] In his role as prelate of St. Paul's in Dublin, Maturin preached sermons that spoke to what he called the "ignorant and inhuman prejudices of the Jews" and referred to them as the "elder brother […] incensed" at the happiness of the prodigal son (Maturin, 1819, 134, 392). In *Melmoth*, Maturin uses the tropes of age and of the outmodedness of anti-Jewish tradition in the service of his fashioning of Jews as objects of horror. While this strong sense of horror fades for Monçada (and for the reader), a good measure of the distancing from Solomon and Adonijah that occurs from the initial shock of encounter never fades. Just as the Wandering Jew embodies the Christian representation of the Jews and Judaism as old, outmoded, and superseded, Adonijah is marked by age. He is first described as an "old man" (263) and he is engaged with and surrounded by bones, suggestive of the unearthed dead. He does show notable

12 On the trope of Jewish blindness, see Lampert (2004, 43-49), Wheatley (2010, ch. 3), and Lipton (2014).

13 As Monçada moves through the tunnel he is drawn forward toward a "faint light. Faint it was, but it was distinct, – I saw clearly it was light. Great God! What a revulsion in my blood and heart, in all my physical and mental feelings, did this sun of my world of darkness create!" (262).

compassion, but even what he means as a hospitable smile is seen by Monçada as grisly: "[T]he smile of age, – the smile of lips over which more than an hundred years have passed, has an expression more repulsive and hideous than can be deemed; it is never the smile of pleasure, – it is a frown of the mouth, and I shrunk before its grim wrinkles" (266). Adonijah's cursed temporal existence, a curse linked through traditional tropes to Jewish belief, transforms him into something "hideous" and "repulsive."

Adonijah is, then, a literal 'old man,' in keeping with the idea of supersession and the trope that as the 'younger faith' Christianity is the true heir of Jewish prophecy as proclaimed in New Testament passages such as Romans 9:12: "the elder will serve the younger."[14] He is not simply trapped within his chamber; he is trapped in time. The skeletons in his chamber serve as physical evidence of his extreme age, since two of them are his own wife and child. Like the Wandering Jew (and Melmoth with whom he functions as a double), Adonijah is cursed with an unnaturally long life. Unlike the Wandering Jew, Adonijah never converts. The past that Adonijah carries into the present is not the Christian moment of the Passion, but the time of the Jewish patriarchs. As Monçada remarks in a parenthetical aside to John Melmoth about the effect of Adonijah, "As he spoke, my eyes hung in reverence on the hoary majesty of his patriarchal figure, and I felt as if I beheld an embodied representation of the old law in all its stern simplicity – the unbending grandeur, and primeval antiquity" (267). Adonijah's "antiquity" is registered through his style of speech, which, in contrast to Solomon, never vacillates between modern and biblical cadences, but rather remains archaic throughout Monçada's encounter with him. For example, at a moment when he is described as "dilated with preternatural emotion," Adonijah exclaims, "I would that the ocean were my ink, and the rock my page, and mine arm, even mine, the pen that should write thereon letters that should last like those on the written mountains for ever and ever – even the mount of Sinai, and those that still bear the record, 'Israel hath passed the flood'" (271). It is as if Monçada (and the reader) were entering into a deeper inner chamber and therefore deeper into the Jewish world, an entrance that also thrusts them back in time. That world, of a Jew who has not given up his faith, does not vacillate between temporalities, but it is caught in the past in a number of ways. Maturin's portrayal of Adonijah builds on a Christian tradition of anti-Jewish tropes which dominated medieval representation of Jews and Judaism and therefore also inherits the medieval relationship between Jewish and Christian bodies that, following Bildhauer, I have argued is a temporal monstrosity.

Adonijah, even more than Melmoth the Wanderer, takes on aspects of the Wandering Jew legend. While, in the novel, neither the Wanderer nor Adonijah are "eternal," the latter resembles the Wandering Jew in how he exists to serve the purposes of Christians, in this case, the recording and transmission of the Wanderer's story. Melmoth resembles the Wandering Jew in his longevity and in his ubiquity, but seems to serve his own diabolical, and ultimately unknowable, designs. Neither Adonijah's final fate, nor his personal history, nor the story of his family and their demise, are ever revealed. Adonijah, like the Wandering Jew, serves a representative function, standing for the Jewish people and the Jewish tradition more generally, as perhaps best reflected in his archaic speech such as his address to his deceased "Leah, the wife of my bosom" (268).

14 For a discussion of supersession and the trope of Judaism as "old" see Lampert (2004, 33-35).

Melmoth, in contrast, uses modern speech, despite being even older than Adonijah. It is not simply a curse that traps Adonijah in the past, but his Jewish identity itself.

Demata has argued convincingly that Maturin was writing from the perspective of one "colonized within a colonizing Empire," as someone "who felt like a stranger in his own land – an Empire whose parts were not united" (2003, 31). We might then see those glimmers of sympathy for Adonijah as a kind of kinship with a man forced to live in a kind of exile. But Maturin's portrayal of Jewish characters ultimately cannot overcome the weight of a Christian tradition that traps Jews in a past that they can only escape by giving up their Jewish faith and Jewish identity and converting to Christianity. Maturin's temporal framing of the Jews renders them monstrous in ways that evoke Cohen's formulation: the Jewish characters "appear in the present yearning to impart an old story, a narrative from the deep past […]. They arrive to recount a lesson in the complexity of temporality" (2013, 451). The particular "lesson" Solomon and Adonijah are meant to teach is one about the Jewish place in history and the place of the Jew in the nation. Their scripture, their history, and even their persons serve to further Christian histories and Christian stories, but like Adonijah's, their own narratives remain untold. In a novel composed of nested stories, these Jewish stories have no conclusions; they merely serve to further Christian tales, or to refer back to Christian representations, as in Maturin's allusions to *The Merchant of Venice*. In this way the familiar stereotypes of the crypto-Jew and the patriarch become monstrous, acting as signs and warnings (*monere* and *demonstrare*) that those who fail to believe properly are doomed to exclusion, an exclusion figured not as a far-flung exile, but as entombment.

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